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ABSTRACT

Several specific maxims of English conversation that suggest interpersonal cooperation in the process of communication are applied to conversation in Japanese. The maxims concern implicature, a proposition implied in an utterance in a particular context but not expressly stated. It is proposed that: (1) while it is easy to overstate or exaggerate in American English, the Japanese prefer to understate or remain close to the truth value of quantitative statements; (2) the amount of information that must be specified to make the statement as informative as necessary is less for the Japanese than for Americans; (3) while both American and Japanese speakers constantly adjust communication forms to meet semantic and pragmatic requirements, the pragmatic force carries more importance for selection of utterance type in Japanese than in American English. These three hypotheses, it is argued, account for much of the communication difference in the two cultures and for the common characterization of the Japanese as "inscrutable." Comparisons are drawn from English and Japanese ways of expressing a variety of assertions. (MSE)

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WHAT MAKES THE JAPANESE INSCRUTABLE? A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Julie Bruch

Abstract: The question of whether Grice's (1967) maxims are universally applicable is examined by looking at quantity implicatures in Japanese. It is hoped that a possible Western bias present in the formulation of some of the pragmatic principles can be investigated by looking at a broader range of linguistic and cultural contexts in this way. I present discussion of three hypotheses related to Japanese communication: (a) understatement is preferred -- maxim of quality, (b) the amount of information required to be specified in conversation is less than for English -- maxim of quantity, and (c) pragmatic forces may call for indirectness of expression -- maxim of manner. The data show that there are different strategies in Japanese for achieving the goals of communication.

The Japanese have oftentimes been characterized by Westerners as vague (and perhaps deliberately so) in human interaction, particularly in expressing their opinions. And from a superficial vantage point, when "foreigners" try to talk with the Japanese, either in Japanese or another language, this vagueness causes, at best, confusion and at worst, hostility. Those who have had some exposure to the language and people of Japan are probably familiar with the difficulty found in interpreting the Japanese smile and the seemingly affirmative shake of the head. They may also have encountered problems when they discovered that "yes" very rarely has the degree of positive commitment that we normally attribute it with having in our language. Indeed, it may even at times mean "no."

I have heard "folk linguists" attempting to explain the seemingly nebulous quality of Japanese speech by

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making reference to traits of the language using reasoning such as the following. "The Japanese don't use pronouns, and many times they don't specify any subject in their sentences." "They don't have the complex system of conjugations and verb tenses that Westerners do." "The Japanese language only has a limited number of phoneme sequences in comparison with our language, so all the words have five or ten homonyms. No wonder it's confusing."

Other people have pinpointed certain cultural factors as being responsible for the lack of clarity we feel when communicating with Japanese people. (For an anecdotal treatment of this, see Chapter 1 of Don Maloney's Japan: It's Not All Raw Fish published by The Japan Times, Ltd., 1979.) Comments are made such as, "In the Japanese culture, it is not polite to contradict or refuse, so they avoid saying 'no' or correcting mistaken information or misrepresentations that occur in the course of a converstion." Even some Japanese people have tried to provide an explanation by pointing out, "We Japanese are an insular people, all of the same race and history, so we understand each other without all the explicit explanation you Westerners are accustomed to."

These forms of folk rationale may have some valid basis, but the problem is certainly explainable in more concrete terms. It will be the intent of this paper to give a more material answer than those discussed above to the question: what makes the Japanese inscrutable?

English speakers are not at all unfamiliar with the experience of expressing a greater amount of information with an utterance than simply whatever is contained by the sum total of the meanings of its words. Nor are we unaccustomed to understanding the hidden intent or contextual relevance of the messages we hear. We understand these linguistic phenomena because we are capable of making use of our ability to make inferences beyond simple word meanings. The proper understanding of sarcasm, irony, metaphor, and other figures of speech, as well as ordinary utterances in conversation depends not only on semantic knowledge, but also on sensitivity to contextual factors surrounding the participants in the conversation. This reference to things beyond actual speech allows us to mean (and understand) more than is actually expressed by words. Inferences of this sort are called "conversational

implicatures" (Levinson 1983:97), and by exploring implicatures in Japanese, we may be able to suggest one answer to the question posed in the last paragraph.

Implicature and Conversational Maxims

Specifically, we will be examining two types of implicatures, both of which have to do with the quantity of information that can be inferred. The first type is scalar quantity implicatures; for example, "all" implicates "most", which in turn implicates "some" (Levinson 1983:134). The second type is clausal quantity implicatures. For example, "I know the sky is blue" implicates "I think the sky is blue" (Levinson 1983:137). Both of these types involve expressions or predicates which can be arrranged in order of strength according to the amount of information they bear and the inference potential they contain.

Also of vital importance to our analysis here are the maxims of conversation proposed by Grice (1967), since a discussion of implicature has as its base the idea that people speak in a cooperative manner when they intend to communicate in an efficient way. The maxims most relevant here are listed below.

A. The maxim of quality: try to make your contribution one that is true.
   i. Do not say what you believe to be false.
   ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
B. The maxim of quantity:
   i. Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes ofthe exchange.
   ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
C. The maxim of manner: be perspicuous.
   i. Avoid obscurity.
   ii. Avoid ambiguity.
   iii. Be brief.
   iv. Be orderly.

It is obvious that two speakers must have a mutual understanding of the particular context in which they find themselves and share a mutually understandable language in order for more than phatic communication to

take place. But beyond this, they must somehow share similar expectations about how people codify their messages with regard to the quality, quantity and manner of speech; otherwise, correct interpretation of what is heard will be impossible.

It is my feeling that Grice was basically correct in suggesting the existence of this kind of conversational cooperation, but that the specific details of each maxim are not universally applicable, and therefore, must be redefined for each culture and language group. It follows that if the maxims operate differently among various languages, the implicatures of certain sentences must necessarily vary as well. We will base the exploration of Japanese implicatures here on that assumption.

Before looking at particular implicatures in Japanese, it would be well to clarify the characteristics of implicatures in general. Gazdar (1977:49) explains an implicature as being "a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a context even though that proposition is not a part of nor an entailment of what was actually said." Grice (1975) describes several tests we can apply to utterances to differentiate between implicatures and other types of inferences such as presuppositions or entailments.

The first test is cancellability, or defeasibility. If we hear that a person has nine sons, we infer by a quantity implicature that he does not have ten sons. But this implicature is cancellable by the sentence, "He has nine sons or maybe more." A second test is non-detachability. If we change the form of a sentence by using synonyms or alternative structure to say the same thing, the implicature remains the same. For example, "He is the father of nine male children." Another test is calculability; that is, we should be able to calculate and explain how the implicature of an utterance is understood from its literal meaning together with the knowledge of the cooperative principle and shared context. By the politeness principle and the maxim of quantity, we can calculate that if someone has ten sons, we will not be told he has nine. A fourth test Grice suggests is the non-conventionality of implicatures. This simply means that an implicature is not included in the conventional literal meaning of an

utterance, thereby making it possible for a sentence to be true while its implicature is false. There is nothing in the conventionally accepted dictionary meaning of the words of the sentence, "He has nine sons," that tells us that "nine" excludes the possibility of eight or ten. We may find occasion to refer back to these tests in the discussion that follows.

Assumptions and Hypotheses

In order to explore some specific examples of the variant implicatures in English and Japanese, the discussion will be based on three assumptions. The first, which has been mentioned earlier, is that Grice's maxims may apply in different forms for different languages, operating language specifically rather than universally. A second assumption, which in fact seems to be an offshoot of the first, is that a given utterance may contain a different implicational potential in different cultures. This is an obvious assumption to make if we define implicature as the unspecified and unspoken meaning of an utterance together with its context. Not only is each speaker's world view different, but also the interpretation of each event and setting will vary, as will value judgments of things such as the relative status of the participants and the purpose of the particular communicative act being engaged in. The final assumption is that even if cross-cultural communicators understand the conventional implications of an utterance, if there is misunderstanding of the conversational implicatures, difficulties will arise in the communication process, resulting in characterizations such as the Japanese "inscrutability" which is being discussed here.

Based on these assumptions, I would like to posit several hypotheses about the differences between Japanese and Americans in their use of communicative forms relative to the cooperative principle. The first hypothesis is that, in general terms, while Americans find it easy to overstate or exaggerate, Japanese often prefer to understate or at least stay closer to the truth value of quantitative statements. This seems to reflect a difference in the choice of scalar expressions between the two cultures; for example, on quantitative strength scales such as those below, this hypothesis predicts

that Americans would choose words from either extreme end, while the Japanese would use words from the middle range more often.

A.	B.	C.	D.
all	always	definitely	know
most	usually	probably	believe
many	often	possibly	think
some	sometimes	unlikely	guess
a few	once in a while	impossible	be unsure
very few	rarely		
hardly any	never		
none			

If this, in fact, can be shown to be a tendency, the maxim of quality ("Do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.") may require reinterpretation.

The second hypothesis holds that the amount of information that must be specified in order to make a "contribution as informative as is required" is less for Japanese than for Americans in certain contexts. This may coincide with the view held by some people that, being of a relatively homogeneous makeup, the Japanese have more common ground and, therefore, less need to make certain aspects of communication overt. The maxim of quantity would be relevant here.

Finally, I would like to hypothesize that while both English and Japanese speakers constantly adjust the forms of their communication to meet the semantic as well as pragmatic requisites of a particular communicative event, the pragmatic force carries more importance in Japanese in the selection of utterance type than in English, and the resulting pragmatic implicatures are more salient. Such a predominating use of the pragmatic plane in Japanese should have an influence on our interpretation of the maxim of manner.

These hypotheses together could account for quite a few of the differences in means of communicating between Japanese and Americans, and indeed can probably point to a cultural typology of the Japanese that would be consistent with cultural descriptions that have been made in other areas and from separate viewpoints. Examples will be shown in the following paragraphs to illustrate the principles at work.

Examples

The first scale of quantitative implicatures to be examined is that of definiteness. The respective scales of English and Japanese in this domain follow. Synonymous variants have been supplied only for the Japanese scale.

A. definitely
probably
possibly

B. zettai (kanarazu, kitto)
tabun (osoraku)
kamo shirenai (deshoo)

The words along the English scale (in A.) have contrasting meanings and are of different strengths. They can be substituted in a single sentence to change its meaning, but none of the words along the scale can be included simultaneously with another in the same sentence.

1. He will <u>definitely</u> arrive tomorrow.
2. He will <u>probably</u> arrive tomorrow.
3. He will <u>possibly</u> arrive tomorrow.
4. *He <u>may definitely</u> arrive tomorrow.
5. *He will <u>probably</u> arrive tomorrow <u>possibly</u>.

We can generalize, then, that each member of the scale is semantically contrastive and, when used in a sentence, reveals the speaker's honest assessment of the degree of definiteness involved in the context being spoken of. Also, we assume that the speaker employs the word from the highest point on the scale that he believes to be true; otherwise, he would be breaking the quantity maxim. It is possible, however, to imagine a context where pragmatic influences would override the need for semantic accuracy and a word from a lower strength on the scale would be used in violation of the quantity maxim. That would be, for example, if a student corrects a teacher's wrong statement, or if an employee tells his manager that his idea did not work. In this type of situation, regardless of the certainty of the student or worker who is thinking "You are <u>absolutely</u> (definitely) wrong," the utterance would more likely be formulated as, "You <u>may</u> be in error." Politeness requires a less strong statement in such a case. In English, the semantic choice may default to a pragmatically governed choice, but if the choices required by meaning (or truth value) and the

circumstances are different, only the one that is the "strongest" will be chosen.

A different situation exists in Japanese (refer to scale B). The term "zettai" needs some explanation. "Zettai" and "definitely" both appear at the strongest end of the scale, but "zettai" cannot really be equated with English "definitely" because, although it basically has that meaning, "zettai" carries a much stronger force and is often used with negative statements (making non-native speakers sound opinionated or aggressive because of an inclination to use it as a translation of the English. In polite or formal conversations, therefore, there is a tendency for a person of lower status to avoid the use of "zettai" and choose a word of weaker force. The word "kanarazu," which also means "definitely," is used with statements containing more positive values. Beyond this distinction, Japanese is interesting in that the choice of a word from the definiteness scale seems to be based on slightly different principles than those just described for English. The semantic choice would be made in Japanese according to the quantity maxim as in English (see 6, 7, 10, and 12 below). But in regard to the pragmatic demands of conversation in Japanese society, there is an option which does not exist so saliently in English; that is, one can soften a statement by employing a word of lesser strength on the scale to show deference while at the same time retaining a stronger word to show the amount of certainty he has (see 8, 9, 11, and 13 below).

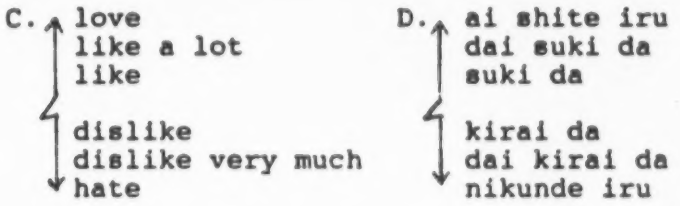
6. He will definitely arrive tomorrow.
7. Zettai ashita tsuku. (absolutely-tomorrow-he will arrive)
8. Zettai ashita tsuku deshoo. (absolutely-tomorrow-he will arrive-probably)
9. Zettai ashita tsuku kamo shirenai. (absolutely-tomorrow-he will arrive-but I'm not sure)

10. Kitto ashita tsuku. (definitely-tomorrow-he will arrive)
11. Kitto ashita tsuku deshoo. (definitely-tomorrow-he will arrive-probably)

12. Kanarazu ashita tsuku. (without fail-tomorrow-he will arrive)
13. Kanarazu ashita tsuku deshoo. (without fail-tomorrow-he will arrive-probably)

The importance of social context to the Japanese is revealed in these usages, and we could predict that when speaking English, Japanese people would tend to use "probably" or "maybe" more often than our American cultural standards would require.

Another scale which is used in different ways in the two cultures will illustrate one more area in which Americans perceive Japanese as withholding quantity or using understatement. It is the scale of affection.

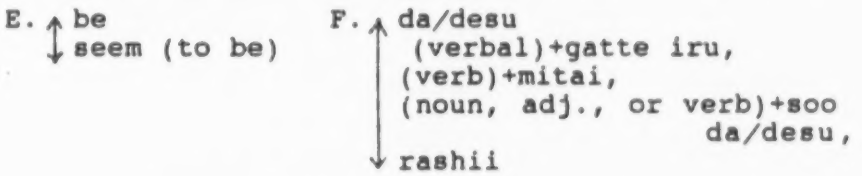


It is generally realized that Americans commonly apply the term "love" rather generously and indiscriminately to animate as well as inanimate entities and to abstract ideas or nonexistent things (e.g., I love your new pencil. I would love to go to Mars. I love the person who first discovered ice cream.). This loose usage of the word is to be ignored here since it can almost be counted as a separate lexical item from that which involves true affection. Using only the narrower meaning of "affection" to interpret this scale, we can show several differences in how words from certain points on the scale are chosen, both as to quantity and quality.

Americans			
"love"		"like (a lot)"	
pets		?pets	
*casual friends		casual friends	
close friends		close friends	
family members		?family members	
romantic relation		*romantic relation	
Japanese			
"ai suru"		"(dai) suki"	
*pets		pets	
*casual friends		casual friends	
?*close friends		close friends	
*family members		family members	
?romantic relation		romantic relation	

In these lists, it can be noticed that "like" in English is more limited in distribution than "love," and will be interpreted as a joke or an insult if used in a romantic situation. Similarly, its use is questionable to describe feelings for family members and pets, which are often like a part of the family. In contrast, in Japanese, "ai shite iru" is either inappropriate or questionable in all the contexts mentioned, and "suki da" is the appropriate choice. An interesting development seems to be the greater acceptability of "ai shite iru" in a romantic sense (and possibly for family members?) among younger people who have adopted Western attitudes. In one sense, a comparison of this area of difference in the two languages is not completely fair because of the Japanese cultural tradition of not explicitly expressing such emotions linguistically. In another sense, however, this whole cultural tendency together with the language difference supports the Western impression of Japanese understatement or concealment of quantity.

A further distinction can be seen in the verb forms chosen to express degrees of being in a certain condition or state or of having a certain quality. The scale is perhaps not so meaningful in English, but when observed with respect to Japanese, it is significant.



The following characterization can be made of the working of the members of this scale in English.

SEEM	?*I <u>seem</u> (to be) tired.	He <u>seems</u> (to be) tired.
	I <u>am</u> tired.	He <u>is</u> tired.

In English, the word "seem" cannot be used with the first person, because a person supposedly knows what condition he is in and does not need to assess his own appearance. This is the only restriction of the use of this scale because in the second or third person, either item from the scale may be used. In accordance with

Gazdar's tests for implicatures, "seem" is defeasible with "be" and vice versa as in the following sentences.

14. He is tired, even though he doesn't seem to be.
15. He seems tired, but he is not.
16. He seems to be tired, and he is.

The scale in Japanese (F) does not offer itself to such freedom of application, as the sentences below will illustrate. In addition to the impossibility of "-gatte iru" or any of its variants with first person reference, the more definitive "da/desu" cannot be applied to statements of the condition or internal feelings of a second or third person (except in novels where the author and the reader have access to knowledge about the characters' internal feelings).

17.	*Watashi wa samugatte iru. (I seem cold.)	Kare wa samugatte iru. (He seems cold.)
18.	Watashi wa samui desu. (I am cold.)	*Kare wa samui desu. (He is cold.)

Moreover, in question formation "desu" can only be used in the second person since it is not logical to inquire the state of a third person (knowing that the person being asked cannot reply with "desu" anymore than the questioner can (Kuno 1973:83)). The sentences cited for English which show the defeasibility of the implicature cannot exist in Japanese, or at least are unnatural.

19. *Kare wa tsukarete iru keredomo tsukarete inai mitai.
(He is tired, even though he doesn't seem tired.)

Once again, this aspect of Japanese, from an English speaker's viewpoint, reveals a reluctance in Japanese to presume to evaluate something which cannot be known, and in the opposite way, English speakers may be interpreted by Japanese as overstating the facts.

The next scale I would like to explore is that of belief and knowing. Once more, essential differences can be seen to exist between the two languages, not just in the way speakers choose to use them, but in the constraints of their structural types. The respective scales are:

G. ↑ know
believe
think
↓ guess

H. ↑ shitte iru (wakatte iru)
to omou (daroo)
↓ kamo shirenai

To be able to discuss the English scale (G), it is necessary first to point out some specialized meanings of "know" and "think" which can be thought of as belonging to separate lexical domains and which, therefore, we should omit from consideration here. There seem to be four distinct classes of "knowing" and "thinking," of which only one allows contrastive distribution of the two words. The other three classes consist of special denotations of the words "know" and "think" and allow only one or the other in a sentence. The first of these is the expression of a personal opinion. Because of the intent to show opinion rather than knowledge, only "think" is possible (e.g., I think that's a pretty name. I think roses smell nice.). The second special case is that of mental activity where again only "think" is appropriate (e.g., He thinks a lot when he's alone. Sometimes I think in Japanese.). The other case of limited meaning is the exclusive use of "know" to literally show knowledge of facts (e.g., I know the answer. They know my name.). If we block these interpretations of the words on the scale, we will be left with sentences in which any of the words can be substituted contrastively according to speaker intent. They will be sentences such as the following, where the blank may be filled with any of these words: "know, believe, think, guess."

20. I _____ there was a full moon last night.
21. I _____ I'm going to be late.
22. I _____ he will arrive tomorrow.
23. I _____ it's going to rain today.
24. I _____ he's been up to something from the devilish look on his face.
25. I _____ she's been to the beach from the sand in her hair.
26. I _____ they've been drinking because they're walking in a strange way, singing loudly, and their eyes are red.

Similar to the other scales discussed earlier, this scale, in Japanese, contains more restrictions. If we try to include the words "shitte iru," "to omou," or "kamo shirenai" (see scale H) in the Japanese

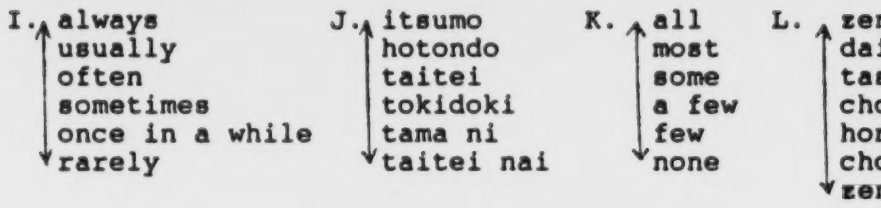
equivalents of the English sentences listed above, it will be found that "shitte iru" or "wakaru" are much more limited in distribution than is English "know" and that ungrammatical sentences will be created in some cases. In the translation of the first four English sentences, it is impossible to assert "shitte iru" unless a very specific contrastive context exists, and therefore, "to omou" is needed.

27. *Kinoo mangetsu datta to shitte iru.
28. *Watashi wa okureru to shitte iru.
29. *Kare ga ashita tsuku to shitte iru (wakatte iru).
30. *Kyoo wa ame da to shitte iru.

In the final three English sentences (24-26), apparently "adequate evidence" exists for an assertion; in fact, although "guess, think, believe" may be used in the sentences, "know" seems a much more natural and logical choice in English. If "wakatte iru" is used in the same sentences in Japanese, the meaning focus changes to have an emphasis on explaining how I know something rather than just stating the fact that I know it. But for the intended meaning of simply asserting that I know it, Japanese requires the weaker "to omou," in spite of the overwhelming evidence which is stated in the sentence. It can be surmised that making assertions of knowledge is considered forward or impolite and that extreme ends of the scale are avoided for this pragmatic reason. Regard for one's impression on the hearer and respect for the hearer prevent stronger statements. From the Japanesse viewpoint, it might be felt that Americans can accurately "know" the future, as in the second, third, and fourth sentences, and that they have the capability of converting conjecture into fact, as in the last three sentences. For this reason, Americans may sound overly authoritative to Japanese, and Japanese, in contrast, may sound noncommital to Americans.

The examples which have been discussed so far are some of the easier ones to cite because they reflect how the language itself enforces boundaries or sets constraints on the ways people can speak. These examples demonstrate the manner whereby purely linguistic rules create certain behavior patterns in communicative interaction. The final example I would like to present is much less concrete in that it derives from the language habits of Japanese people rather than the language rules. Because of the fact that no

research is avilable to prove the validity of the next example, I would simply suggest that impressionistically, it seems to be a part of the two cultures in the way outlined below. Again, in these scales, a very general tendency may be found.



These two scales in the respective languages can basically be said to be of the same type. The upper and lower ends of the scales show the absolute values or positions of extreme strength while the middle sections show moderate values. Lacking any evidence besides impression, I only present my own assessment of how the two cultures use these scales. It is that Americans quite easily and quite often employ members standing at the scales' extreme ends even when the truth value of what they are saying is (and is understood to be) somewhat weaker. This tendency can be understood more readily if we posit two possible truth values for those words. One is a global or absolute value as in, "She will never walk again." "The pomegranites always ripen in the fall." "All species of alligators have that type of teeth." In these sentences, the quantity words can be interpreted at face value. The other, more common value of the same words occurs when they are context delimited, and even though they are stated as absolutes, their global value is understood to extend only to the boundaries of the particular context for which they are being used. Some examples and their understood contexts are:

31. That student never opens his mouth. (in this class)
32. No one rides a horse to work anymore. (at least in this city)

However, other statements can be made which cannot possibly be global, but whose context is difficult to determine, for example, "He never takes a bath." "He's always smiling." These are exaggerations and are possible in both Japanese and English.

In spite of the existence of this type of scalar exploitation in Japanese, it is rather more limited. The tendency of English speakers to use extremes freely in many situations is replaced in Japanese with a tendency to use extremes only in relatively informal contexts, reserving the more moderate expressions for the majority of situations. In other words, it appears possible to hypothesize that the scales in the two languages may be used identically, but are not.

If this hypothesis were duly checked by frequency studies of the occurrence and context of occurrence of the words in these scales and then proven to be correct, it would support the view that Japanese prefer understatement and have a stronger preference for using words from the scale which are near the truth value. Americans, in contrast, would be shown to enjoy using overstatement in both directions, positive and negative. If the contexts of usage could be described, it might be determined that pragmatics has a major influence on Japanese choice. Similar to the earlier examples with Japanese "zettai" and "kitto" (definitely) (scale B), it is not considered polite or respectful under certain conditions in Japanese culture to use strong statements, even when they are called for by the quantity maxim.

A couple of other bits and pieces should be mentioned because of the interesting contrast they provide to English. On the scale of obligation: [must--should--can], the absolute end "must" or its synonym "have to" is often used in English, and its Japanese counterpart "(verb)+nakereba naranai" is used in similar fashion. But it is interesting to note that while they are used in parallel ways in the two languages, the potency of this strongest member of the scale in Japanese in its literal translation is somewhat weaker and less absolute than English "must." It can be literally interpreted as, "if (I)don't (verb), things won't work out." Still we see the Japanese avoidance of forceful wording or overstatement.

Now, just when we think we have found sufficient examples to explain the common Western perception of the Japanese as being vague or inscrutable, plentiful other examples crop up in the language which would prove that they are sometimes more explicit in language use than we are. Take the following most common way of asking the time as one instance.

33. Ima nan ji desu ka? (Now what time is it?) Ima desu ka? Go ji desu. (You mean now? It's five.)

This time we are puzzled not by the vagueness of the exchange, but rather by the time deixis which is twice made overt. In English, even once would be unnecessary. This overtness is a seeming contradiction to what has been claimed here thus far, but actually it appears that the repetition of such words in conversation serves an important pragmatic function, that of slightly distancing the giving of a direct answer and thereby softening its force. Numerous other information questions such as asking a price, someone's height, or the name of something may very often elicit similar deictically repetitive responses.

Interpretation

Having looked at various samplings of the language and how they are used, we will now return to the hypotheses posited earlier. It has been suggested, by use of the preceding examples, that the three conversational maxims of quality, quantity and manner operate distinctly in Japanese and English. The scale of [definitely--probably--possibly] may be tempered by context in English, but Americans use it more to fit the semantic qualities required of the situation. The extreme members of the scale of frequency and quantity (always-all/never-none) in English are in relatively free variation with lesser members of the scale without strict regard for truth values. The Japanese, with respect to both of these scales, show speech dominated by context constraints which demand more rigid application of truth values in the choice of words or allow understatement much more easily than overstatement. This understatement also exists lexically in the Japanese word for "must". The scale of "love-like" (and we could include "dislike-hate") reflects an area in Japanese where understatement is not only preferred, but required by the culture. In this case the quality as well as the quantity maxims need revising (in particular, because of the tendency not to even codify feelings such as this linguistically). In English, it is obligatory to express the feeling of love in words and to express it with a word of adequate scalar strength. The scales of "be-seem" and "know-think" in Japanese must be employed according to truth

values taken literally. In English, a word of higher standing than the truth value may be used without any anomaly in the communication. The quality maxim should be more stringently worded for Japanese because "adequate evidence" does not weigh equally as in English.

It becomes obvious that either the maxims can be rewritten to describe appropriately the communication process in specific languages or they can be retained as they stand with reinterpretation of the sub-rules. According to the way Japanese interaction operates, the following revisions may be postulated. To the quantity maxim could be added a sub-rule such as the following. "Certain inner emotions are expected to be left unspoken, or if spoken, should be represented by a somewhat weaker point of the scale. Make your contribution as informative as you can without being presumptuous." (To avoid appearing presumptuous in Japanese culture, one should not make long assertions in polite interaction, but rather curtail responses to a quantity of minimal adequacy.) Silence, traditionally, has been much more revered by the Japanese than by Westerners. As for the quality maxim, for English speakers, it should be noted that flouting is easily allowed, or in other words: "Do not state that for which you lack adequate evidence, but if you have some evidence you are free to overstate what you know." In Japanese it would have to be: "Even if you have adequate evidence for stating something, do not state it assertively or forcefully. Downplay what you know." And lastly, the manner maxim would describe Japanese better if it said, "Slight ambiguity or obscurity should be the goal of respectful utterances." Overall, these types of maxim revisions point to the conclusion that there is generally less absoluteness in Japanese, and that the well-known Buddhist concept of "moderation in all things," although perhaps not a direct influence on the language, is a description apropos of how Japanese is used by its speakers. The cultural propensity for avoidance of conflict and maintenance of harmony is certainly reflected in the language through this eschewal of the making of strong assertions. The tendency of young people in Japan today to use words of stronger scalar position (e.g., "zettai, mattaku") may betoken the gradual acceptance of the use of more emotional expressions in speech and a gradual cultural change toward the acceptance of individual-based behavior rather than the traditional group orientation.

Conclusions

The world view of each cultural group of people is formed by a combination of objective reality and the subjective categorizations and interpretations imposed upon it by the group. The manner in which certain aspects of language are employed and the purposes of interaction, therefore, are determined by properties relative to each peculiar human social context and conceptual system. In crossing cultural boundaries, communication is bound to be fraught with the difficulties presented by these differing conceptualizations of the world and human functioning within it. The only way to overcome these difficulties is by means of constant broadening of our experiential filters to allow new forms of perception and signification to become meaningful.

In language, two lines of research exist, both of which will provide abundant evidence of the nature of culture-specific ways of producing meaning. One is an examination of the operation of symbolic forms in the language itself. By contrasting syntactic and semantic or lexical patterns and constraints of one language with those of another, much can be understood. The other area is on the level of discourse and deals not with the linguistic constraints, but with the social and contextual limitations and freedoms which are allowed to govern the use of linguistic forms. Both of these aspects of language, its form and its use, should lead to acquisition of the same information, as well as provide complementary accounts of the most representative facets of the culture displayed in the language.

Of course, the characterization of a single language and culture in this way does not have much import if presented in isolation. It must be presented in comparison with a differing system. The meaningfulness of Japanese traits is of interest here particularly because of the points of contrast between Japanese and English. More concrete investigations would add further support to the tendencies suggested here. They might include comparative statistical frequency studies of the occurrence of the extreme members of the scale versus the moderate members in both languages. Also, native speaker judgments of acceptability or grammaticality could be tested using

scalar members in contexts which purportedly disobey the characterizations made here. Another possibility would be to give native speakers sentences that break the constraints that exist and ask them to imagine and supply possible contexts. In addition, since Grice's maxims were written by an English speaker and we have seen here how they might vary within an "inscrutable" Oriental context, it would be interesting to make comparisons in other directions by examining implicatures from other cultures which need similar explication of the stereotyped views we hold of them.

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